

Marine Transportation Advisory Board
Sitka, Alaska

December 10, 2009
Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Mike Korsmo, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm in the Maksoutoff Room, Harrigan Centennial Hall, Sitka, Alaska.

ROLL CALL

Marine Transportation Advisory Board members present: Robert Venables, Maxine Thompson (by teleconference), Cathie Roemmich, Mike Korsmo, Gerald Hope, Clay Koplin (by teleconference), Seth Church, Patrick Owen, Mark Eliason, Shirley Marquardt and J.C. Conley.

INTRODUCTION OF THOSE PRESENT

DOT&PF/AMHS staff: Capt. John Falvey, Cyndi Ivey, Chuck van Kirk, Danielle Adkins, Jessie McCarron, Richard Leary, Jim Beedle, and Andy Hughes.

Members of the public: Leo Luczak, Marlene Campbell, Elizabeth Watanabe, Garry White, Scott McAdams, Nancy Davis, John Stein, Phyllis Haskett, Mim McConnell, Reber Stein, Arlene Jackson, Sheila Finkerbinder, Rep. Peggy Wilson, Dave Scott, Pauline Jim, Don Pegues, Windy Skaflested, Larry James, Sr., Lillian Woodbury, Frank Jim, Mike Jackson, Ed Phillips.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Gerald Hope moved to approve the August 13, 2009 minutes as presented. Shirley Marquardt seconded the motion. Motion passed.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Gerald Hope moved to approve the agenda. Shirley Marquardt seconded the motion. Ms. Marquardt added the following items to the agenda under Action Items: (1) task DOT&PF staff with the creation and maintenance of the MTAB website as discussed; (2) DOT&PF staff offer MTAB members a formal email address; (3) DOT&PF staff and MTAB hold a two-day workshop the end of January to discuss and provide input on the SATP. Patrick Owen added: (4) AMHS managers meet with SEARHC staff to discuss SEARHC's concerns and recommendations for ferry service. Motion passed.

WELCOME

Mayor Scott McAdams welcomed the Marine Transportation Advisory Board and AMHS staff to Sitka and thanked the Board for meeting in Sitka.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Mike Korsmo thanked the City and Borough of Sitka for extending an invitation to meet in Sitka and providing the meeting space, the Sitka Tribe of Alaska for providing transportation and Marlene Campbell for coordinating meeting location.

Mr. Korsmo reviewed MTAB's recommendations to the administration including adding money to the budget to allow the Fairweather to operate May and June 2010 and to ensure that schedule is maintained. One of the Board's main recommendations forwarded is for the *Kennicott* to operate full-time during the summer to allow the *Tustumena* to service the Aleutian Chain two times per month in the summer; funding be placed in the Vessel Replacement Fund to build new boats.

The Chair summarized the Board's work session on the: constructing a website for MTAB to include minutes from previous meetings and meeting materials; and, discussion with DOT&PF/AMHS staff regarding planning. Mr. Korsmo encouraged the public to contact the Board with comments and concerns.

STAFF REPORTS

Captain John Falvey, AMHS General Manager, reviewed the Vessel Report.

Deputy Commissioner Jim Beedle updated the Board on the Chenega Dock project. Clay Koplin noted that the dock has been identified in the Prince William Sound Transportation Plan. Mr. Beedle noted that neither the Chenega Bay or Tatitlek docks belong to the Alaska Marine Highway System. Only the *Kennicott*, *Tustumena* and *Aurora* can use the docks and passenger loads don't support. Mr. Beedle identified projects that need funding: Prince Rupert terminal, Haines terminal, Alaska Class Ferry project, home port in Ketchikan for the *Lituya*.

Chuck vanKirk, Operations Manager, reported the Angoon Dock Project will go out to bid soon with construction to begin in July/August 2010. It was determined that September 2011 would be the best month to close terminal with the least impact. The project is expected to be completed by October 2011.

Mr. Venables asked about coverage for the *LeConte* during the overhaul for 2010. Capt. Falvey commented that the *Aurora* would be moved to Southeast and running the Chenega in Prince William Sound.

Mr. vanKirk reported that a new multi-modal facility was being constructed in partnership with the US Park Service in Gustavus with completion expected by October 2010.

Business Manager, Dick Leary, briefly reviewed MTAB's budget for fiscal year 2010. Mr. Conley asked AMHS staff to provide the FY2011 budget numbers; it was noted that those can be provided after the Governor's budget is released on December 15. It was agreed that the AMHS FY2011 budget will be provided for the next board meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Elizabeth Watanabe, Health Systems Analyst with SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC), spoke to the Board about the concerns of SEARHC with respect to transportation from outlying villages for medical care.

J.C. Conley asked that MTAB go on record supporting a request to the legislature for funding for AMHS to order engines to replace the failing engines on the fast vehicle ferries. Ms. Watanabe will forward her letter to legislators.

John Stein, Sitka Sound Science Center, thanked the Board for meeting in Sitka. Mr. Stein noted the different community groups that rely on the ferry. Chuck vanKirk will meet with Mr. Stein concerning event dates and scheduling.

Garry White, Sitka Economic Development Association, thanked the Board for meeting in Sitka commenting on the decline in cruise ship visits and encouraging AMHS to keep the same sailing schedule.

Marlene Campbell, Sitka and Borough of Sitka, also thanked the Board for meeting in Sitka. She thanked Cathie Roemmich for her work on behalf of the Sitka and Borough of Sitka; she also thanked the staff for its support of Sitka.

Patrick Owen asked about moving the terminal to Warm Springs; Ms. Campbell stated the Borough has not taken a position.

Mr. Korsmo noted that MTAB supports putting May and June service back in the schedule.

Sheila Finkenbinder, Sitka Chamber of Commerce, spoke to the need for increased service and keeping the Fairweather serving Sitka.

Mike Jackson, Organized Village of Kake, expressed concerns about using catamarans in rough weather and spoke in support of an enclosed terminal in Kake.

Ed Phillips, owner, Icy Strait Lodge in Hoonah, thanked for Board and AMHS noting the ferry's importance to the community. Mr. Phillips expressed support for the Aurora servicing the community and encouraged AMHS staff to communicate with the communities.

SHORT SEA PILOT PROGRAM

Arlene Jackson, Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, and Jamie Cagel, Allen Marine, Inc. presented the program to the Board. Ms. Arlene Jackson stated that CCTH is not intending to replace AMHS service; the pilot project would be a supplement.

Following a lengthy discussion, Mr. Conley asked that Mr. Hope be included in negotiations and discussions with communities; Mr. Hope moved that Ms. Thompson also be included. Unanimous agreement.

UPCOMING LEGISLATIVE SESSION

It was agreed to have a face-to-face meeting in Juneau in late January. The Chair will contact the House and Senate Transportation Committees concerning a joint meeting with MTAB.

2011 AMHS BUDGET DISCUSSION

J.C. Conley moved that the Marine Transportation Advisory Board, in writing, request the legislature and the commissioner of the Department of Transportation consider a vehicle for the state to order replacement engines for the *Fairweather* and the *Chenega*. Maxine Thompson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The letter will be included as part of the legislative priority list.

Gerald Hope moved the AMHS 2011 budget be included on the January agenda. Seth Church seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The Chair will identify specific requests.

ACTION ITEMS

Shirley Marquardt moved that MTAB task DOT staff with the creation and maintenance of the MTAB website as discussed. J. C. Conley seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Shirley Marquardt moved that DOT staff will offer to MTAB members a formal state email address. J.C. Conley seconded the motion. Motion passed.

J.C. Conley moved that MTAB request through the commissioner of the Department of Transportation a formal two-day work session to discuss the regional transportation plans that affect the Marine Highway System and provide input to the plans. The meeting date in January will be determined by popular vote. Gerry Hope seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Patrick Owen requested that AMHS managers meet with SEARHC to discuss their concerns. MTAB agreed to endorse the meeting.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Gerry Hope thanked the City and Borough of Sitka and the Sitka Tribe for arranging the meeting and the representatives from Central Council for their presentation.

Robert Venables also thanked Sitka for hosting the meeting.

Clay Koplin reported on a meeting with the Cordova City Schools and other constituents; he will forward his notes to staff.

J. C. Conley requested the staff investigate improved teleconferencing capabilities.

Mark Eliason expressed his appreciation for the opportunity travel by ferry and thanked Sitka for hosting the meeting.

Cathie Roemmich thanked staff and the Sitka community.

Mike Korsmo thanked all.

Maxine Thompson thanked Sitka for hosting the meeting and the staff.

Robert Venables moved to adjourned; Mark Eliason seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 pm.